

and he recognizes that NET Corps better prepares teachers to address these challenges. I am proud to have him as a cosponsor, and I look forward to working with him to pass this important legislation.

Finally, let me say that since introducing this legislation, I have been contacted by countless high-tech employees, teachers, and parents who support this legislation. They are part of what I call the NET Corps movement.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in this movement. Our children's futures depend upon it.

#### BLACK BERETS FOR U.S. ARMY SHOULD BE MADE IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to once again bring attention to the issue of the decision by the Army Chief of Staff to issue black berets as standard issue head gear to all Army personnel. Until this decision was made, the black beret had been the outward symbol of the Army Rangers, one of the most elite fighting forces within the United States armed services. While much has been said regarding the decision, I believe that even more needs to be said, particularly regarding the decision to bypass the Barry amendment and purchase the bulk of the berets totaling nearly \$35 million from Communist China.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when the small businesses of our Nation are struggling for new business, it is a travesty that our own government has chosen to bypass the Buy American Rule in order to meet an arbitrary deadline. While the 225th birthday of the United States Army should be marked with great celebration, I do not believe that the men and women who so faithfully serve in the Army would want the day marked by having to wear a beret that says "Made in China."

I recently received a letter written by a small businessman from Sanford, North Carolina, and I will submit this letter for inclusion in the RECORD.

Mr. Brooks Pomeranz is president of Cascade Fibers Company, a small mill that in a matter of a few short months could convert its cutting and sewing operation into a mill that could have produced at least a part of the beret order for the United States Army. He writes, and I quote him: "With the decline of U.S. textiles and U.S. textile mills closing every month, it is unconscionable that our government is contracting foreign companies to manufacture these berets. With just a portion of this business being contracted to my company would enable us to keep 80 families from losing a vital in-

come for their children. Our quality is outstanding and our service is superior. Eighty families, 80 moms, 80 dads and countless children whose livelihood would continue if this bill were given even a portion of the order for new berets. Instead, those berets will be made by men and women in China who work under the worst possible working conditions for merely pennies per day. The same men and women who are told that they are not allowed to worship as they please and who are told that they cannot have more than one child. And, at the center of all of this is the undeniable fact that United States tax dollars would go to a communistic government to be used for the purpose of weapons from our enemies to threaten and intimidate not only the people of the United States, but also our allies. This should concern all Americans."

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO) and the Committee on Small Business on the House side for holding next week's hearings on this issue, and I want to call on the House Committee on Armed Services on which I serve to seek possible remedies to this problem before it is too late. The men and women of the United States Army and small business owners around the country deserve at least that much.

Mr. Speaker, the letter I referred to earlier follows:

CASCADE FIBERS COMPANY,  
Sanford, NC, March 21, 2001.

Hon. WALTER B. JONES,  
House of Representatives, Cannon Building,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN JONES: I am the president of Cascade Fibers, a small textile company in Sanford NC employing 80 associates. Cascade Fibers, a cut and sew textile business, makes table linens, table skirting, placemats, napkins, and aprons for the hospitality, rental laundry, and retail markets. Our quality is outstanding, and our service is superior. But with large corporations buying out smaller companies, and with the growth of overseas napery being sold at a much cheaper price, Cascade Fibers is experiencing a very difficult time competing in this market, and our time may soon be running out.

I am including articles that I have recently read regarding berets that our military will be wearing that are to be manufactured overseas so that our soldiers will have them for the US Army's 226th birthday on June 14th. With the decline of US textiles and US textiles mills closing every month, it is unconscionable that our government is contracting foreign companies to manufacture these berets. With a portion of this business being contracted to Cascade Fibers, would enable us to keep 80 families from losing a vital income for their children. Our quality is outstanding and our service is superior.

I am asking for your help ASAP to help me promote my company to the right contacts to be able to receive a portion of this business. Anything that you can do will be greatly appreciated by these American families so they can continue to provide for their children.

Sincerely,

BROOKS POMERANZ,  
President.

#### COMMUNITY, MIGRANT AND HOMELESS HEALTH CENTERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CRENSHAW). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, Community, Migrant and Homeless Health Centers provide cost-effective, quality health care to our country's poor and medically underserved. They act as a vital safety net for our health delivery system and reduce health disparities that large portions of our populations experience.

These centers are nonprofit, community-owned and operated, and serve all 50 States. They provide health care to those who otherwise could not have access to it, serving one in 12 rural citizens, nine in 8 low-income Americans, and one in 10 uninsured Americans. Surely this is something that this House in a bipartisan manner can support.

I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) who will follow and speak on this same issue.

Mr. Speaker, I represent a rural area; and much of my district has very limited access to health care. Centers in my district operating in Salem, Vandalia, and Springfield, Illinois, have made vital health services available to the community. By serving a specific area, the centers can tailor their services to the specific needs of the community and work with the schools, businesses, churches and community organizations to provide the best care possible.

Community health centers are cost-effective in a viable way to bring quality health care to underserved populations. Increasing Federal funding will enable community health centers to expand and reach more of the uninsured. That is why I support the Reach bill, which would double the budget for community health centers.

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But it is also an inexpensive way to get preventative and primary health care to those who have fallen through our health care delivery system.

I encourage all our colleagues to support this vital program that helps so many.

#### URGING SUPPORT FOR H.R. 6, THE MARRIAGE PENALTY AND FAMILY TAX RELIEF ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CRENSHAW). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PLATTS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PLATTS. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we will cast a very important vote here in the House. We will take up the second component of the President's comprehensive tax relief package, H.R. 6,

the Marriage Penalty and Family Tax Relief Act.

I rise today to join my freshmen Republican colleagues in expressing my strong support for H.R. 6. Earlier this year in January my freshmen colleagues and I announced we would commit ourselves to the enactment of legislation that would eliminate the marriage penalty once and for all. I am delighted that our House leaders have embraced this number one priority of the freshman class and have scheduled this legislation for a vote tomorrow.

I want to thank the lead sponsor of H.R. 6, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER). Over the past several years, the gentleman from Illinois has led the effort to eliminate the marriage penalty and restore fairness and equity to our Tax Code. I sincerely appreciate his hard work and dedication to this very important issue.

I also compliment the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) and members of the Committee on Ways and Means for moving this legislation very quickly, and for their decision to couple the marriage penalty relief aspects with a much-needed increase in the child tax credit.

Mr. Speaker, I was proud to cosponsor the Marriage Penalty and Family Tax Relief Act as one of my first deeds as a Congressman. This important legislation will double the child tax credit. It will go significantly further than was proposed initially in President Bush's tax package to lessen the impact of the marriage penalty.

H.R. 6 is not tax relief for the rich. In fact, this legislation is designed substantially to reduce the tax burden on low- and middle-income families. It does so by raising the standard deduction for married couples to twice that for single taxpayers.

In 2000, the year 2000, the standard deduction amounted to \$4,400 for single taxpayers, but just \$7,350 for married couples filing jointly. That is an automatic tax penalty for married couples at every income level. H.R. 6 will eliminate this unfair and inequitable provision.

H.R. 6 will also expand the 15 percent tax bracket, the lowest tax bracket for married couples, to twice that of single taxpayers. Under current law, the 15 percent bracket covers taxpayers with taxable income up to \$26,250, but only \$43,850 for married couples filing jointly.

H.R. 6 will also help low-income working families by increasing the income ceiling on the earned income tax credit, making more couples eligible for this vital tax relief.

In addition, H.R. 6 will provide \$100 in immediate tax relief this year to every low- and middle-class working family by increasing the child tax credit from \$500 per child to \$600 per child, retroactive to January 1 of this year; then, phasing that increase into \$1,000 by the year 2006.

Finally, H.R. 6 will ensure this critical tax relief does not erode due to unfair consequences from the alternative minimum tax.

Mr. Speaker, there are over 28 million working couples in the United States, including more than 63,000 couples in my district. Enactment of H.R. 6 will return over \$225 billion in marriage penalty relief to these hard-working American families.

When coupled with the across-the-board rate reductions the House passed earlier this month, the expanded child tax credit would provide the average family of four with an additional \$560 in tax relief in the year 2001 alone.

Over the next few years, the Marriage Penalty and the Family Tax Relief Act will save the average family of four well over \$1,000 a year in taxes. That is more than \$1,000 to have available to spend on a mortgage payment, new clothes for the children, day care, preschool, college savings accounts, or a host of other critical priorities in a family budget.

But the Marriage Penalty and Family Tax Relief Act does more than just allow American families to keep a larger percentage of their earned money. It would also help keep families together. With nearly 50 percent of marriages ending in divorce today, we certainly should not penalize couples who stay together. Rather, we should do everything we can to alleviate the economic constraints which hinder their ability to build a family and a lasting relationship.

Mr. Speaker, let us give American families a fighting chance. I urge my colleagues to support the Marriage Penalty and Family Tax Relief Act when it comes to the floor tomorrow. I thank again the leadership for bringing this issue before us and making sure we have the full support of the leadership ranks and Members from both sides of the aisle who want to do right for the working families of our Nation.

#### CALLING FOR CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN SUDAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I have just come from a subcommittee hearing of a subcommittee of the Committee on International Relations, on which I do not serve, but the Chair and the ranking member were kind enough to afford me the courtesy of sitting at a hearing today on Sudan.

I come to the floor today as part of the effort of an increasing number of Members to draw to the attention not only of the House, but of the country the need to step forward on slavery, genocidal war, bombing of humani-

tarian workers, and forced conversions of Christians and animists to Islam, the worst litany of human rights violations in the world today.

The world is full of human rights violations. We have spoken up on many of these violations, and done much on many of them. We have not been able to get hold of this atrocious situation, although this House and the Senate have almost unanimously condemned these violations in Sudan.

The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), the ranking member of the subcommittee, and I had a 1-hour special order last year. No Members joined us then, but just this week the multi-lateral, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY), and a bipartisan group of Members held a press conference on Sudan indicating that this House, Members from both aisles, indeed, are not going to sit still for the outrage in Sudan without moving forward.

We have a new Caucus on Sudan chaired by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF), perfectly bipartisan in nature. Soon another resolution from the House condemning the violations in Sudan will come forward.

Thus far the most dramatic response has been that schoolchildren have bought other children and women out of slavery in Sudan. As important as that is for drawing attention to the atrocities in Sudan, it is hardly a grown-up response to what is happening in southern Sudan.

At the hearing today and among all of those concerned, we hear a plethora of responses. It is important to settle in on some immediate as well as long-term responses.

Everyone knows that related to the long-term responses to stop the war in Sudan, what leads to the slavery, what leads to the genocidal bombings, is the search for oil by Khartoum, bombing its own people in the south to depopulate it so it could get to that oil without sharing it with the entire country.

But in the meantime, there are a number of things we can do. Surely we need to bypass the Khartoum Government and use religious organizations and nongovernmental organizations in order to get food aid and medical and other assistance to the people of southern Sudan.

Surely we now in this country ought to be leading the United Nations toward a condemnation of the war of the north against the south. There are some who want a no-fly zone, although I do understand that the problem there is that it could engage us in hostilities with Khartoum.

We may not be there yet, and perhaps we should not get there, but we cannot sit still for what is going on in Sudan.

Recently I signed on to a letter circulated by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) for a special envoy so we could begin to restart diplomatic